ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

The invention is a method for operating a file server system in a cluster mode that provides for relatively rapid and reliable takeover by one file server of another. This is done by a system operator requesting takeover of file services of a file server, letting the first file server complete existing file service requests from clients, refusing further file service requests addressed to the first file server, and the one file server taking over by transferring file service requests to the one file server. As part of this takeover the one file server takes on the identity of the first filer and activates network interfaces and network addresses that replicate the first server's network addresses.